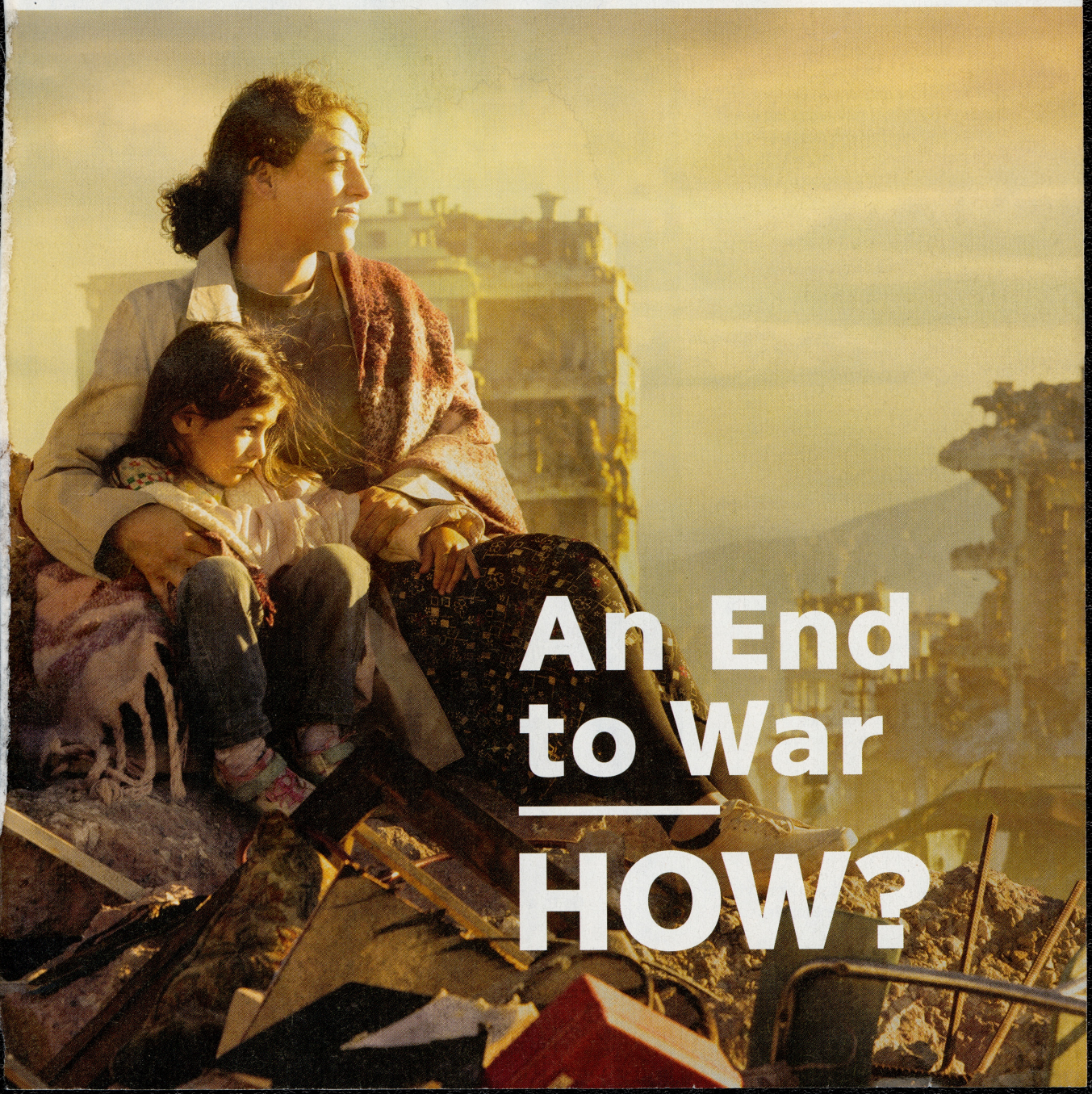
THE WATCHTOWER
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



An End to War

HOW?

THE WATCHTOWER®
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, honors Jehovah God, the Ruler of the universe. It comforts people with the good news that God's heavenly Kingdom will soon end all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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Do you long to live in a world without war or violent conflict? For many, that idea sounds appealing but unrealistic. The Bible reveals why mankind's efforts to end war have failed. It also explains how you can be sure that worldwide peace *is* possible and will soon become a reality.

In this magazine, the terms "war" and "conflict" refer to fighting between armed groups to achieve a political objective. The names of some of the individuals quoted have been changed.

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The Horror of War

Few experiences affect people more deeply than war and violent conflict. Soldiers and civilians around the world know the tragic effects firsthand.

SOLDIERS

"Catastrophic events—life-changing injuries or death—happen all around you. There is a constant feeling of uncertainty." —*Gary, Britain.*

"I was hit by bullets in my back and face, and I saw many killed, including children and the elderly. War makes you hard-hearted."—*Wilmar, Colombia.*

"When someone is shot in front of you, the scene doesn't just go away. The screaming and moaning continue. You don't forget about that person—ever."—*Zafirah, United States.*

CIVILIANS

"I felt like I could never be happy again. You fear for your life, but even more than that, you fear for the lives of your family and friends."—*Oleksandra, Ukraine.*

"It is terrifying to stand in line for food from 2:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m., not knowing if you will be hit by a stray bullet." —*Daler, Tajikistan.*

"War left me without parents. It made me an orphan with no one to comfort or care for me."—*Marie, Rwanda.*

Despite the tragic effects of war, the individuals quoted above have found peace. What is more, they are convinced that all war and violent conflict will soon end. This issue of *The Watchtower* will use the Bible to explain how that will happen.

How War and Violent Conflict Affect Us All

"The world is facing the highest number of violent conflicts since the Second World War and 2 billion people—a quarter of humanity—live in places affected by such conflict."

United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed, January 26, 2023.

War and violent conflict can break out in places currently at peace. Even those who are far from a conflict may suffer because the world is more interconnected than ever before. And the harm inflicted lasts long after the fighting ends. Consider some examples:

Food shortages. According to the World Food Programme, "conflict is still the biggest driver of hunger, with 70 percent of the world's hungry people living in areas afflicted by war and violence."

Physical and mental health problems. The threat of war and the insecurity that it brings can cause people to suffer stress and anxiety. Those who live in conflict zones are not only more likely to suffer physical harm but also to develop mental health problems. Yet, they often have limited access to medical services.

Forced displacement. As of September 2023, more than 114 million people worldwide had been forced to flee their homes, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. A major reason for this crisis is war and violent conflict.

Economic hardship. People often experience economic problems triggered by war, such as inflation. They may suffer when government resources are diverted away from services such as health care and education in order to fund military operations. And the cost of rebuilding after the devastation caused by war is enormous.

Environmental problems. People suffer when the natural resources they depend on are deliberately destroyed. Polluted water, air, and soil can cause long-term health problems, and the danger from hidden land mines remains long after the fighting stops.

Without a doubt, war is both destructive and costly.

War and Bible Prophecy

Bible prophecy indicates that war and violent conflict would be part of the sign of "the conclusion of the system of things." (Matthew 24:3) Jesus Christ foretold:

- "You are going to hear of wars and reports of wars. . . . For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom."—Matthew 24:6, 7.
- "When you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified." —Luke 21:9.

The original-language word translated "disturbances" can refer to disorders, uprisings, opposition to established authority, insurrections, political turmoil, and riots.

To learn more, read the article "What Is the Sign of 'the Last Days,' or 'End Times'?" on jw.org.

Can We End War and Violent Conflict?

People fight for many reasons. Some fight for political, economic, or social change. Others fight to gain control over land and natural resources. Many conflicts are fueled by long-standing ethnic or religious differences. What is being done to stop the fighting and to achieve peace? Can we expect these efforts to succeed?

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Improve the quality of life for people. This can help eliminate or reduce economic inequality, which can be a key driver of conflict.

Limitation: Requires governments to change their spending priorities. In 2022, an estimated 34.1 billion dollars (U.S.) was spent worldwide on peace building and peacekeeping. However, that was only 0.4 percent of military spending for that same year.

"We spend much more money and resources managing conflicts than on preventing them and building peace."—António Guterres, secretary-general of the United Nations.

What the Bible says: The world's governments and institutions can help the poor, but they will never be able to eliminate poverty completely.—Deuteronomy 15:11; Matthew 26:11.

Top: Drazen_/E+ via Getty Images

DIPLOMACY

Goal: Prevent or settle disputes peacefully through dialogue and negotiation to the mutual advantage of both sides.

Limitation: One or more parties may be unwilling to negotiate, compromise, or accept an agreement. And peace agreements are easily broken.

"Diplomacy does not always succeed. A negotiated agreement to end a war may be so flawed that it sets the stage for further conflict."—Raymond F. Smith, American Diplomacy.

What the Bible says: People should "seek peace." (Psalm 34:14) But many people today are "disloyal, . . . not open to any agreement, . . . betrayers." (2 Timothy 3:1-4) Such traits prevent sincere political leaders from resolving conflicts.

DISARMAMENT

Goal: Reduce or eliminate weapons, especially nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

Limitation: Nations are often unwilling to disarm because they fear losing power or becoming vulnerable. Eliminating armaments does not address the reasons people fight.

"Many of the disarmament commitments and promises entered into at the end of the cold war have gone unfulfilled, including practical steps to reduce dangers, ease international tensions, and ultimately bring us closer to a safer and more secure world."—"Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament."

What the Bible says: People should abandon weapons and "beat their swords into plowshares." (Isaiah 2:4) More is required, however, because violence begins within a person's heart.—Matthew 15:19.

COLLECTIVE SECURITY

Goal: Nations agree to take collective action against aggressors. In theory, an aggressor will not start a war if that means fighting the combined forces of many nations.

Limitation: The threat of retaliation does not guarantee peace. Nations do not always abide by their commitments, nor do they agree on how and when to act against aggressors.

"Although collective security . . . played a prominent part in the League of Nations Covenant and is embodied in the United Nations Charter, it has completely failed in both cases."—"Encyclopedia Britannica."

What the Bible says: There is often safety in numbers. (Ecclesiastes 4:12) However, we cannot look to human institutions for lasting peace and security. "Don't put your trust in human leaders; no human being can save you. When they die, they return to the dust; on that day all their plans come to an end."—Psalm 146:3, 4, *Today's English Version.*

Despite the concerted efforts of many to achieve lasting peace, we are still plagued by war.

Is the world becoming more peaceful?

There are some people who claim that the world is actually more peaceful now than ever before. They say that the wars fought today are shorter and less deadly and that compared to previous centuries, a smaller percentage of the total population die in battle. Others, however, question such comparisons and the statistics used to support them.

Regardless of what some may say, there can be no denying that war and violent conflict directly affect a huge portion of the world's population today and indirectly affect all of us.

Why War and Violent Conflict Continue

The Bible reveals the root causes of war and violent conflict and why these tragic events persist.

SIN

God created our first parents, Adam and Eve, in his image. (Genesis 1:27) That meant they would naturally reflect God's qualities, including peace and love. (1 Corinthians 14:33; 1 John 4:8) However, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sinned. As a result, all of us have inherited sin and death. (Romans 5:12) Inherited sin inclines us toward violent thoughts and actions.—Genesis 6:5; Mark 7:21, 22.

HUMAN GOVERNMENT

God did not create us to rule ourselves. The Bible says: "It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." (Jeremiah 10:23) For that reason, human governments cannot completely eliminate war and violence.

SATAN AND HIS DEMONS

The Bible reveals that "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) That "wicked one" is called Satan the Devil, and he has a murderous disposition. (John 8:44) He along with other wicked spirit creatures are the unseen instigators of war and violence.—Revelation 12:9, 12.

We cannot eliminate the root causes of war and violence, but God can.

Religion and War

Religions often condone, justify, or promote war. Such religions are among the false religious institutions collectively referred to as "Babylon the Great." (Revelation 18:2) God holds Babylon the Great responsible for the death "of *all* those who have been slaughtered on the earth."(Revelation 18:24) To learn more, read the article "What Is Babylon the Great?" on jw.org.

Humans cannot end war

How War and Violent Conflict Will End

The Bible reveals that God, not humans, will bring "an end to wars throughout the earth." —Psalm 46:9.

GOD WILL ELIMINATE HUMAN GOVERNMENTS

God will end human governments by means of what the Bible calls the war of Armageddon.* (Revelation 16:16) At that time, "the kings of the entire inhabited earth" will be gathered together for "the war of the great day of God the Almighty." (Revelation 16:14) Armageddon is God's war to end all wars.

God will replace human governments with his Kingdom, or government, that will rule from heaven and never be destroyed. (Daniel 2:44) God has chosen his Son, Jesus Christ, to be its King. (Isaiah 9:6, 7; Matthew 28:18) This government is the Kingdom* that Jesus taught his followers

* Read the article "What Is the Battle of Armageddon?" on jw.org.

* Watch the video *What Is God's Kingdom?* on jw.org.

to pray for. (Matthew 6:9, 10) All mankind will be united under one global government with Jesus as Ruler.

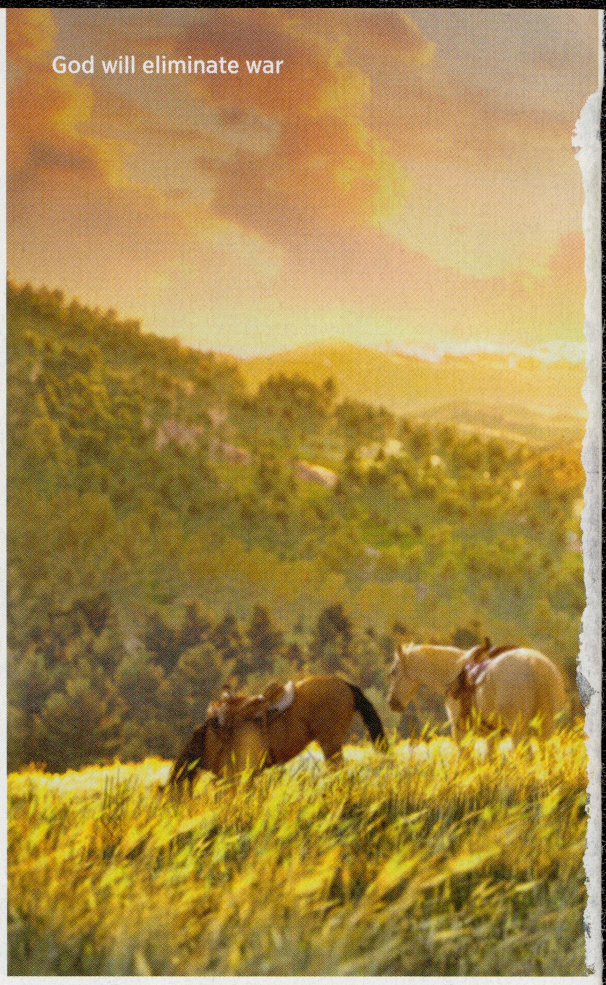
Unlike human rulers, Jesus will not use his authority to advance his own interests. Because he is fair and impartial, no one will have to worry about being overlooked because of his race, nationality, or ethnic background. (Isaiah 11:3, 4) And people will not have to fight for their rights. Why not? Because Jesus will take an interest in the welfare of each person. "He will rescue the poor who cry for help, also the lowly one and whoever has no helper. . . . From oppression and from violence he will rescue them."—Psalm 72:12-14.

God's Kingdom will rid the earth of deadly weapons. (Micah 4:3) It will also remove wicked people who refuse to stop fighting or disrupting the peace of others. (Psalm 37:9, 10) Every man, woman, and child will

feel safe wherever they go on earth.—Ezekiel 34:28.

People will enjoy ideal living conditions under God's government. It will eliminate the problems that cause people to fight, such as poverty, hunger, and inadequate housing. Everyone will have access to an abundance of nutritious food and will enjoy a comfortable place to live.—Psalm 72:16; Isaiah 65:21-23.

Under God's Kingdom, the harmful effects of war will be removed. This includes not only physical wounds but also the mental and emotional anguish that people suffer because of war-related atrocities. Even those who have died will be resurrected back to life on earth. (Isaiah 25:8; 26:19; 35:5, 6) Families will be reunited and the cruel memories of war will be part of "the former things [that] have passed away."—Revelation 21:4.


God will eliminate war

GOD WILL ELIMINATE SIN

God's Kingdom will unite people in worship of the only true God, Jehovah*, "the God of love and of peace." (2 Corinthians 13:11) People will learn how to live together peacefully. (Isaiah 2:3, 4; 11:9) All who apply what they learn will be set free from the effects of sin.—Romans 8:20, 21.

GOD WILL ELIMINATE SATAN AND HIS DEMONS

God's Kingdom will destroy the instigators of war, Satan and his demons. (Revelation 20:1-3, 10) Without their evil influence, "peace will abound."—Psalm 72:7.

You can be confident that God's promise to end war and violent conflict will come true. He has both the ability and the desire to eliminate war.

- God has the wisdom and power needed to end war and violence. (Job 9:4) Nothing is impossible for him to accomplish.—Job 42:2.

* Jehovah is the personal name of God.—Psalm 83:18.

- God hates to see people suffer. (Isaiah 63:9) He also "hates anyone who loves violence."—Psalm 11:5.
- God always keeps his word; he cannot lie.—Isaiah 55:10, 11; Titus 1:2.

God will bring real and lasting peace in the future.

Why has God permitted warfare?

You may wonder why God has allowed wars to continue until now. To answer that question, watch the video *Why Does God Allow Suffering?* on jw.org.

Finding Peace Despite War and Violent Conflict

"Before studying the Bible," says Gary, who formerly served in the military, "I had no idea *why* there was so much cruelty, injustice, and trouble in the world. But now I have peace of mind. I know that Jehovah God will make the world a safe place."

Gary is not alone. Consider how the Bible has helped others.

THE BIBLE SAYS: "You, O Jehovah, are good and ready to forgive."—Psalm 86:5.

HOW THIS HELPS: "This verse assures me that Jehovah is merciful. I know he is willing to forgive me for all that I did in the past when I participated in war." —*Wilmar, Colombia.*

THE BIBLE SAYS: "I am creating new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be called to mind, nor will they come up into the heart."—Isaiah 65:17.

HOW THIS HELPS: "I suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and depression because of my experiences in the military. But this scripture reminds me that soon Jehovah will hush my disquieting thoughts and end the nightmares that I have. They will no longer reside in my mind or heart. What a gift!"—*Zafirah, United States.*

THE BIBLE SAYS: "In his days the righteous will flourish, and peace will abound until the moon is no more."—Psalm 72:7.

HOW THIS HELPS: "I often think about those words. Soon the nightmare of war will be over, and we won't have to worry about the safety of our loved ones anymore."—*Oleksandra, Ukraine.*

THE BIBLE SAYS: "Your dead will live. . . . Awake and shout joyfully, you residents in the dust!"—Isaiah 26:19.

HOW THIS HELPS: "Almost all of my family members were killed during the genocide against the Tutsi. But this verse assures me that I will see them again. I look forward to hearing their happy voices when they are resurrected!" —*Marie, Rwanda.*

THE BIBLE SAYS: "Just a little while longer, and the wicked will be no more . . . But the meek will possess the earth, and they will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—Psalm 37:10, 11.

HOW THIS HELPS: "Although the war has ended, there are still injustices and evil people. These verses have been especially empowering for me. Jehovah sees everything and understands my situation. He promises that soon all suffering will end and be forgotten."—*Daler, Tajikistan.*

The individuals quoted in this magazine are among the millions of Jehovah's Witnesses who have been helped by the Bible to find peace. They have learned how to overcome racial, national, tribal, and personal hatreds. (Ephesians 4:31, 32) Jehovah's Witnesses are politically neutral and refuse to take part in violence.—John 18:36.

Jehovah's Witnesses also find support in their loving worldwide brotherhood. (John 13:35) For instance, Oleksandra, quoted earlier, had to flee with her sister to another country because of war. She says: "When we crossed the border, we immediately saw local Witnesses who were there to welcome us. Their support helped us adapt to living in a new country as refugees."

We warmly invite you to join us at our meetings where we learn about the Bible's peaceful message and how to apply it. Visit jw.org to find a location near you or to request a free interactive Bible course with one of Jehovah's Witnesses, using the publication *Enjoy Life Forever!*

Have You Ever Wondered?

- Why is there so much war if everyone wants peace?
- Is it possible to enjoy true peace in a world that is filled with violence?
- Will we ever see a time when there is no more war?

The Bible's answers to these questions may surprise you and will no doubt comfort you.

Why not examine for yourself what the Bible has to say about this important topic? Learn more in this issue of *The Watchtower.*

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